1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6
Toba SI12

tive fashion, and, according to Nordenskiöld and Karsten, such agriculture as the Choroti engage in, is still on a very inconsiderable scale. Nowadays, however, these Indians cultivate — although not to any great extent — the following plants, viz.: pumpkins, cucumbers, water melons, maize, beans, manioc, sweet potatoes, tobacco and cotton.[1] Their only agricultural implements consist of digging-sticks of hard, heavy wood, and a kind of paddle-like, wooden spades. A typical digging-stick is reproduced in fig. 27.

It is probable that the Choroti originally had no other domestic animals than dogs, and the only tame animals I personally saw among this tribe were dogs and fowls. Those of the Choroti Indians who are living in the neighbourhood of the Pilcomayo possess, beside the animals mentioned, also sheep, goats, cattle, horses and cats. Sheep-rearing has now come to be of great importance to the Indians, who use the wool as material for mantles, fillets, etc.

As mentioned, the Choroti are a nomadic people. Their changes of location may be due to various circumstances. When pasture is exhausted in one place, they must look about for another; they move on to more profitable fishing-waters, or wander into regions that are rich in game and wild, edible plants. But there may also be other, and quite different, reasons for the Choroti's leaving their old abodes. In epidemics, when deaths are plentiful, it happens that the Choroti abandon their villages, and this they may also occasionally do if they are apprehensive of visits from whites (see pp. 47 and 48). In a first-rate monograph, Dr. Ragnar Numelin has exhaustively analyzed the causes governing the nomadic instinct in primitive peoples. As re-

Fig. 131. Cord on which fish are strung by means of a large needle of hard, heavy wood. This kind of carrying-gear is very common among the Choroti. The specimen here reproduced originates, however, from the Toba (neighbours of the Choroti). Gran Chaco, Bolivia. $^{8}/_{6}$. Riksm. 03. 3. 766.

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), p. 29.

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better part of an hour, and when I was allowed to put on my clothes again, my body was full of large, red, marks from the sucking. The two worthies entertained me during the whole doctoring process with a lively conversation which I did not understand. From the pantomimic show I could, however, gather that it was a consultation. For a fee I gave one of the physicians a shirt and the other a pair of tight-fitting drawers.»[1]

As mentioned before, in case of illness the Choroti try to back up the work of the medicine man by dancing; such dancing is then regarded as magically counteracting the influence of the spirit of the illness.[2] The spirit of the illness is by the Choroti called »mohsek ihitek», i. e., the arrow-shooting spirit, which, as I have pointed out in the foregoing, signifies that the Indians believe that the »mohsek» in question has the power of causing illness by arrow-shot. The belief that illnesses could be caused by »fairy-darts» is met with among a number of different peoples, and, as we know, was formerly common also in Sweden.

The Choroti also try to cure themselves of illnesses by internally taking medicines consisting of decoctions of herbs, etc. It is, nevertheless, possible that the Indians themselves regard these, which we consider natural, remedies as being magical.

When an epidemic disease causes many deaths in a Choroti village, it is the practice of the Indians to burn the huts and remove to another site. This they do, either from fear of the spirits of the dead,[3] or in order to dodge the attack of the spirit of the disease.[4]

On the death of her husband, a Choroti widow cuts off her hair and burns it, and paints her face black with soot. We may take it that these signs of mourning also are of magical import. As an instance of this, the Choroti say that widows cut off their hair so that it shall not be a means of their husbands' spirits molesting them.[5]

One evening when after a long day's shooting I arrived at the Choroti village situated near our camp at Tatarenda, I was met by the sound of monotonous singing, muffled drumming, and the noise of magic rattles.

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[1] Nordenskiöld (13), pp. 95 and 96.

[2] Karsten (1), p. 14.

[3] Karsten (2), p. 30.

[4] Cf. Karsten (1), pp. 32 and 33.

[5] »When I asked the Chorotis why a widow cuts and destroys her hair, I received the answer that the dead husband, who wants his wife to follow him to the grave, is believed to attack her through the hair; in order to rid herself of this danger she shaves it off.» Karsten (4), p. 62.